

## MULCHING STRAWBERRIES.

Burt ; March 26th, Native Ferns of New England, illustrated with numerous slides, H. L. Clapp.

Why should not our Ontario Societies take a hint, and plan out a course of meetings for the remaining months of

the winter, with one subject for discussion at each meeting, introduced by one capable person. Eleven o'clock Saturday morning might not suit every where ; for often an evening meeting will be preferable.

## MULCHING STRAWBERRIES.

IT is a general practice among fruit growers, especially those in localities where the winters are severe, to give their strawberry beds some kind of mulch after the ground becomes frozen in the fall.

The mulch serves for several purposes, winter protection to the plants, summer conservation of moisture, cleanliness of berries and subjugation of seeds during the fruiting season.

It may be of clean straw, marsh hay or forest leaves. Fine marsh hay or leaves is the best, but one must be governed by the variety and cost of the material at hand, especially an extensive grower, but whichever material is used, it should be free from foul seeds, and be evenly distributed over the plants that the plants are not smothered.

It should be only thick enough that the plants are not discernible. As soon as freezing weather is past in the spring, this mulch can be worked away from over the plants and into the middle of the row, leaving that which is under the plants undisturbed, so as to keep the berries free from sand.

Should the season be dry, this mulch will be of much benefit to retain moisture for the development of the fruit, as

the strawberry is 82 % water.

It likewise serves the purpose of a cultivator, preventing the growth of weeds. When the fruiting season is over, we mow the vines over, and as soon as dry enough, are burned, selecting a day when a brisk wind is blowing so the vines will burn quickly without injuring the crowns of the plants:

The cultivator is kept going often enough to keep the ground mellow and the weeds subdued. By winter a new growth of vines have appeared and are prepared to yield another crop. This method has enabled us to keep our beds in bearing much longer than by any other method we have yet tried.

Unless the ground is previously free from all foul seeds and grasses, this plan will prove a failure. It is necessary that some cultivated crop be grown upon the ground before setting to plants. Buckwheat has proved a good crop to grow on my soil. Sod ground should be avoided as it is quite apt to be infested with the larvæ of the May beetle, commonly known as the white grub, besides several other injurious insects.

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